DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 524 CS 206 102

AUTHOR Milligan, Janice
TITLE Using the Composing Process and Positive Reinforcement to Teach College Basic Students to Write.
PUB DATE Dec 80
NOTE 53p.: M. Ed. Thesis, State University of New York College at Brockport.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College English: College Freshmen: *Course Organization: *Developmental Studies Programs: Higher Education: *Positive Reinforcement: Remedial Programs: *Teacher Behavior: *Teaching Methods: *Writing Instruction: Writing Processes: Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Writing Apprehension

ABSTRACT

Following a literature review on the subjects of the decline in student writing abilities and increased student writing apprehension, this paper offers teachers information on a basic writing program that reduces writing anxiety and improves writing skills through large doses of positive reinforcement. The second section of the paper discusses the major goals of a course for basic writers and synthesizes a teaching strategy for writing instruction based on the theories and practices of experts in the field of basic writing, including James Moffett, Mina Shaughnessy, Peter Elbow, Janet Emig, and James Britton. Subsequent sections of the paper list ten course aims for the basic writing teacher to follow (including developing a rapport with the students, avoiding academic speech and educational jargon, giving immediate and frequent positive feedback, avoiding the use of deadlines, and depending on oral exercises to stimulate ideas for writing), an outline of a teaching method to be used in basic writing courses, and copies of questionnaires that assess student writing attitudes, writing anxiety or apprehension, and writer's perception. (RL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED198524

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

USING THE COMPOSING PROCESS AND POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TO TEACH COLLEGE BASIC STUDENTS TO WRITE

SEMINAR IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
State University College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Janice Milligan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

by

Janice Milligan
State University College at Brockport
Brockport, New York

Janice Milligan
428 Black Walnut Drive
Rochester, NY 14615

December, 1980

CS206102

Since sport any type of sport wether it team or indivdel competion not only Ruses the athlete but also the spectator. The spectator can be Rialed or excited about a game for example the World Series. Many spectators who go to see thier team play often feel that thier team win a game that the spectator themselves has also gained an accomplishment.

Albert wrote this. Albert is a 6'4" basketball player. He loves the sport and is very good at it. And he wants to teach it. He wants to teach children, to encourage them all to take part in athletics, and to coach those who demonstrate exceptional skill in basketball. To do this Albert needs a college degree with a major in Physical Education.

Albert has been accepted at the State University College at Brockport. He is a freshman there. His friend Julio enrolled at Monroe Community College, a comprehensive two-year school which has open admissions. He is a freshman in the Criminal Justice program.

Both Albert and Julio are high school graduates who have valid skills in their chosen fields. But neither Albert nor Julio can write a sentence. They cannot spell. They cannot punctuate properly. They do not know when to use a capital letter. And they are both afraid to try. How can this be? What in the world happened?

Perhaps their problem is related to the recent decline in the writing skills of all students entering college. A. Bartlett Giamatti, President of Yale University, states that it is a widely accepted fact that our high schools are no

longer "producing graduates who have mastered the most important basic skill--writing." In an article for the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Giamatti is quoted as saying that youngsters in general are arriving at college today "with a lack of a sense of the hard work and discipline it takes to write well." (Richards, 1979)

There are a number of reasons for this. Willard Wirtz, former U. S. Secretary of Labor, blames it on teaching loads. "Teachers ask students to do little essay writing today, finding it easier to gauge student achievement by means of easy-to-correct multiple-choice quizzes," he explains. "But it is impossible to teach writing as it should be taught if we're talking about the present teaching force working an eight hour day." (Richards, 1979)

Merrill Sheils, who wrote an article for Newsweek magazine entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write," also feels that "overcrowding and increased workloads have led many teachers to give up assigning essays and to rely, instead, on short-answer exercises that are easier to mark. As a result, many students now graduate from high school without ever having had any real practice in writing." (Sheils, 1975) Sheils believes, however, that there are other reasons for the breakdown in writing skills. He feels that the causes "range from inadequate grounding in the basics of syntax, structure, and style to the popularity of secondary school curriculum that no longer requires the wide range of reading all students must have if they are to learn

to write clearly."

Sheils blames television, which influences children with its "simplistic spoken style," prevents them from reading, and "does not demand that they take active part in their learning." He also blames the "subtle shift of educational philosophy away from the teaching of expository writing" that was characteristic of the 60's. "Many teachers began to emphasize 'creativity' in the English classrooms" to the extent that grammar, structure and style were completely neglected. And finally, he blames the structural linguists, who began influencing teachers with their contention that "the spoken idiom is superior to the written, [so there is] no need for students to study formal rules."

Sheils also touches on the effect that the growing concern for minorities and underprivileged students has had on our high schools. He feels that the tendency to cater to those who claim that "standard English is just a 'prestige' dialect" and that it is an "act of repression" to insist on it has had a detrimental effect on the quality of student writing. This is just one aspect of the gradual retreat from the standard curriculum which resulted from the effort to meet the needs of ethnic groups and other less privileged students. Christopher Lasch, a professor of history at the University of Rochester, blames this "democratization of education" (the effort to reform and broaden the curriculum beyond intellectual training to include the masses) for the decline in the quality of writing

of all students. In an article in the "Forum" section of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle entitled "Why Johnny Can't Read, Write, or Think," Lasch writes that "mass education," which he feels "began as a promising attempt to democratize the higher culture of the privileged classes, has ended by stupifying the privileged themselves. Modern society has achieved unprecedented rates of formal literacy, but at the same time it has produced new forms of illiteracy." The inability to write well, he claims, is now not only a weakness of the low income groups, but has "extended to elite schools as well as to community colleges, junior colleges and public high schools. . . .Even at the top schools in the country, students' ability to use their own language [has] undergone a relentless process of deterioration." (Lasch, 1979)

"Concerned and progressive people have continually wanted to expand our educational system and have fought. . .for more years of schooling for more people, for a better chance to learn, a greater opportunity to become someone with a significant place in the world," writes Margaret Mead. (Mead, 1976) The effort to do this has resulted in some changes directed at meeting the needs of students from lower socio-economic classes. This, she admits, has contributed to the over-all change in our philosophy of education, a change which, unfortunately, has resulted in a shift away from the basics. But other factors, factors such as a rapidly growing society, the convergence of distant places by radio and TV, the continual barrage of information thrown at

students by the media, and the increasingly fast pace of living have also contributed to the change.

This shift away from the basics, as Margaret Mead acknowledges in an article in Redbook magazine entitled "Why Our Schools Are Failing to Teach," has affected all of our students, both the bright, interested children and the less privileged ones as well. In an effort to make school "interesting" and thus stimulate the bright, interested children, the more progressive schools developed a curriculum which offered "no penmanship exercises, no alphabets, no spelling bees, no arithmetic tables, no bits of poetry committed to memory, no grammar rules, no dates of great events--no mindless memorization at all to stifle the imagination, no routine to hinder questions and no immovable facts to get in the way of creativity." The children learned, "as bright and interested children can manage to learn by almost any system," but the new method left its mark. For what they learned "floats unanchored and awash; they cannot organize their thoughts." (Mead, 1976)

Obviously it is a mistake to lower the quality of education. It hurts the entire student body. It certainly cheats the bright capable students. But the effect that it has on the less capable students, the ones the new curriculum was in part designed to help, should not be overlooked. For the less privileged children are hit even harder. The movement to "make school easier for minority children" and thus enable them to receive an education has ended up giving them almost no education at all. The bright

students will survive. They can manage to pick up the skills that they need, put in a little extra effort, study a few additional hours and proceed forward. But the less capable students, the minorities, the students from lower socio-economic groups, do not find this so easy. They have been "crowded into poor, neglected and underfinanced schools and taught by teachers far too harassed to keep track of any one child's development." For them the high schools dropped Greek, Latin, French and German and added industrial, vocational, and manual training. For them "mathematics and the sciences were taught sketchily, and history, even American history, was passed over quickly." They "were not taught to read well and were seldom asked to write." (Mead, 1976) True, they did graduate, but the education they so vitally needed if they wished to continue on with their schooling was sadly neglected.

However noble the intentions of educators may have been at the time the changes were initiated, the shift in the philosophy of education and the resultant changes in curriculum inadvertently prompted a downfall. The students received high school diplomas, but the brighter ones graduated unable to write competently, and the less capable ones graduated with practically no skills at all. These less capable students, the minorities and the underprivileged whose skills are so minimal, are the ones who are of greatest concern. For these students, who a few years ago tossed their high school diplomas into a drawer and immediately entered the job market, are now entering

college. Believing, perhaps, that college is the one magic potion which can make their lives better than their parents', these students decide to enroll. And, as it happens, they CAN enroll.

Mina Shaughnessy, in setting the stage for a textbook aimed at helping these students, points out that many four-year colleges, largely in response to the demands of the 60's for mass education at the college level, have adopted admissions policies which allow them to "admit students who [are] not by traditional standards ready for college." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 1) Community colleges now have open enrollment policies. And since the mid 1970's, when an increase in available colleges and universities occurred simultaneously with a decline in the number of students, four-year schools have become even less selective. As Thomas Calahan, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the State University College at Geneseo, admitted in an interview for the Democrat and Chronicle, colleges are "digging deeper and deeper into the pool of prospective students. And the deeper you dig, the lower the talent." (Smith, 1976)

Stephen Adolphus, Chief of the Bureau of Higher Education Opportunity Programs at the New York State Education Department, stated at the April, 1980, Symposium on Developmental Education that "we must deal with the problems that the broad spectrum of admissions has presented. Students of lower socio-economic and cultural levels are now entering college. We have different student constituencies; therefore, we must update our programs

to meet the changing needs."

This creates a new challenge for the college teacher. The current curriculum is too difficult for these students. Present classroom methods do not reach them. They are not equipped to handle the traditional weekly assignments in persuasion, exposition, or research. If these assignments are given to them, they will quit. And it is possible that without some direction, without some understanding of what is happening and some idea of what to do about it, the teachers will too. Phyllis Zagano, an English teacher at the State University of New York at Stony Brook moans

> When I started teaching, seven and a half years ago, I ran into an occasional student who didn't know his asterisk from his elbow. But now thousands of them invade the campuses each fall, and the absolute worst end up in my classes.
>
> . . .I know that at several schools, Berkeley included, they've had it so bad they've started a "Bonehead English" course, and that at the University of Houston recently 60 per cent of the freshmen couldn't pass even the third essay they wrote. . .
>
> At the beginning of each semester, I ask my students about the contents of their senior English courses. I've had answers ranging from "Introduction to Film" to "Set-Building for Theatre" to "Creative Dramatics." The only student who remembered a course remotely resembling what the over-30 crowd remembers as "Grammar" attended a Catholic high school somewhere north of Syracuse.
>
> While the Modern Language Association put it more delicately when it wrote that "students are coming from high school with a far less firm grasp on fundamentals than before--middle-class as well as disadvantaged students," I'm beginning to believe that no one under the age of 19 can write a simple declarative sentence.
>
> . . .I just don't have the time or the emotional energy individually to tutor 26 students

> (in basic grammar). I really wish I did. I really wish it wasn't necessary. I really wish I didn't have to teach freshman comp. (Zagano, 1976)

But we can't give up. Whatever their deficiencies, these disadvantaged students, whom Mina Shaughnessy has labelled "Basic Writers," do have potential. They have the ability to learn, the marvelous optimism, and the energy and vitality of the very young. And although it sometimes may not appear to be true, they do want to learn. They are simply overwhelmed. True, their writing SHOULD have matured at a steady rate, indeed there is a "sequence of psychological development" which indicates that they SHOULD be able to apply the basic rules of grammar and be ready to tackle a persuasive essay, but they simply are not. So for these students, as James Moffett points out in his book Teaching the Universe of Discourse, we must "continue to teach these things only because we did not succeed in teaching them before." (Moffett, 1968, p. 16)

The biggest problem initially, the one that makes the task of teaching these students such an awesome one, is that they have already experienced so much failure, failure which in a sense has crippled them. By the time they enroll in college, these students have been intimidated by poor grades, by masses of red pencil marks covering their feeble attempts to write, by long, miserable hours of academic lecture that they long ago quit trying to interpret, and by volumes of criticism and "mocking out" from more academically successful peers. And

naturally, so much negative reinforcement has made them reluctant to try. No one likes to fail.

"Students as a whole," writes Cam Bowie, a freshman at Monroe Community College, "are petrified of failure, of making mistakes in class, of being snickered at, and logically tighten their jaw muscles in class. Our society allows all too little room for failure. Paradoxically, if you don't risk failure, then you stifle your growth. It's an inevitable axiom of life. I've been witness to too many minds that offer stimulating conversation before and after class, but act as if they are shackled once in the classroom." (Bowie, 1976)

Since to Basic Writers classroom writing has always been synonomous with failure, they are particularly apprehensive about facing a situation in which they are required to complete a written assignment. They are a perfect example of "shackled" students. At some point in their schooling when they should have begun developing writing skills, they failed to do so, fell behind, and have been "buffaloed" ever since. They are discouraged. They are overcome by insecurity, fear, and anxiety. And it is a vicious circle. If they do not write, they will not learn, but they cannot learn because they cannot write. If they are asked to write, they clam up. They freeze. Their fear immobilizes them. Their anxiety creates an impenetrable "block."

Researchers support the belief that fear and anxiety affect a student's ability to perform in writing. Miller and

Daly, who created and experimented with the WAT (Writing Apprehension Test) concluded from their research that anxious students, since they "avoid situations where writing is required (in the classroom, for instance,). . .lack the necessary competence gained through experience and thus, when encountering a situation where they are forced to write, do poorly and justify their expectation of failure." (Daly, 1975)

Virginia Book administered this same WAT to a group of college Basic Writers at the University of Nebraska. She presented her findings in a paper entitled "Some Effects of Apprehension on Writing" to the annual meeting of the American Business Communication Association in San Diego. Book concluded that "individuals identified by WAT as apprehensive about writing, write and divulge less information. The highly apprehensive subjects in this study produced 3 times fewer words and conveyed 4½ times less information. These findings substantiated previous research suggesting that anxious persons have less confidence in their opinions and judgments, and are likely to reduce risk of exposure by revealing less about their views. This reticence may well be associated with negative prior experiences. Those experiences often lead to avoidance of writing tasks and subsequent underdeveloped skills." (Book, 1976)

It seems, then, that the only way to help these students, to pull them out of their shells, to melt their fear and get them to start writing, is to take them by the hand and lead

them through the process of composing with so much encouragement and reassurance that they finally do succeed. For they do not believe that they CAN succeed. They never have. So they are terribly insecure. They need large doses of positive reinforcement, given in a continuing series of shots, to restore their self-esteem. What the discouraged Basic Writers (and their discouraged teachers!) need is a course in "Breaking Basic Writer's Block With Encouragement." To teach such a course is a slow and laborious task for the teacher, takes a great deal of patience, and means an extra semester of study for the student, but if it works, it is certainly worth it. The result? These students write. And they can earn that college degree.

The course for Basic Writers has four major goals. First, the Basic Writer will become less apprehensive about writing. Secondly, he will understand the composing process. Thirdly, he will write a successful paragraph. And, finally, he will repeat the process in other modes. The method used to accomplish these goals is based on the philosophy that if he receives enough encouragement, if he is convinced that he has a "voice" that others want to hear, the Basic Writer will be receptive to a lesson in writing. Then, when he is given a clear picture of the composing process, he will be able to follow it in logical steps. Finally, once he succeeds at writing his first piece, he will try some more. And, with proper guidance and repeated encouragement, the Basic Writer will learn to write by writing!

A wealth of literature has been published on methods of teaching writing, including a number of books and articles describing successful methods of teaching Freshman Composition. In recent years, literature dealing specifically with the problem of teaching the Basic Writer has been added to the collection. Opinions, of course, are as plentiful and as diverse as the students we are attempting to teach. All of the authors, however, acknowledge that writing is an essential skill which too many of our entering freshmen lack, that the need to teach them this skill is critical, and that writing can be taught.

Many highly qualified, experienced writers and teachers

endorse the method of starting the students writing immediately. Some experts do advocate beginning with an examination of sentence structure and working slowly and laboriously toward expanding the sentence to gradually create paragraphs, but others, particularly those who have worked with Basic Writers, find that the students become discouraged and overwhelmed by this method and never do feel equipped to attempt any of their own writing. Cecelia Kingston, in a straightforward article for Impact, states bluntly that "if the instruction in writing concerns itself primarily with the study of grammar; if the writing activities are non-sequential and fragmented; if the focus in writing is primarily on the individual sentence, on the correct spelling of a word, and on the memorizing of new vocabulary words, then how can we wonder why [our students cannot write.]" (Kingston, 1980)

James Moffett, in his book Teaching the Universe of Discourse, advocates teaching writing "not by analyzing language but by having students use it in every realistic way. Languages are not content subjects, like history or physics; they are symbol systems and the great thing to learn about symbol systems is how to manipulate them, not how to analyze them." (Moffett, 1968, viii) Describing with rational, logical discourse the stages of growth and development of the child's intellect, Moffett demonstrates the futility of beginning with language theory and the effectiveness of developing the skill of using language. "Generally," he explains,

"the increasing complexities of sentence structure. . . accompany the increasing cognitive ability to interrelate and subordinate classes and propositions. What will further the normal growth of sentence elaboration is practice in language tasks." In fact, "a specially devised program of isolating these structures and issues for the student is unnecessary and probably misguided, since those very things will arise in developmental succession anyway if the correspondence I am claiming between levels of discourse and stages of growth is true." (Moffett, 1968, p. 53)

W. E. Coles, Jr., an Assistant Professor of English at Case Institute of Technology, writes that one of the assumptions that he bases his composition course on is that "the only way one learns to write is by writing." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 31)

Peter Elbow, author of Writing Without Teachers, also stresses the effectiveness of learning to write by writing. An advocate of freewriting exercises, administered regularly and frequently to improve writing, he is firm in his belief that the more one writes, the more he learns about the process and the better at it he becomes. In an article called "A Method for Teaching Writing," Elbow claims that "what is called for is a writing course which ignores, at least initially. . . whether the writing is true or good style. . . .The point is to try to build from strength and only gradually to proceed toward areas of weakness. We can try as much as possible, thereby,

to avoid the common school situation in which the student is trying to satisfy criteria that he doesn't know, or understand, and thus cannot really accept even if he wants to." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 20)

The Basic Writer, however, does need some guidelines. For a number of reasons he is not able to start right out writing without a great deal of encouragement and a clear explanation of what he is supposed to do. He needs a simplified illustration of the composing process which he feels capable of following. "All writers go through certain creative rituals and insist of setting special conditions for themselves before they can start composing," writes Robert Blake in an article for the English Journal. "Our students are no different. And they should know, as experienced writers do, that there are several stages in the composing process, stages through which they must pass before they can produce a piece of competent writing." Blake lables these stages "Prewriting, Planning, First Draft Writing, and Rewriting." (Blake, "How to Talk to a Writer," 1976)

Mina Shaughnessy, author of Errors and Expectations, also believes that Basic Writers must "experience in a conscious, orderly way the stages of the composing process itself." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 81) But she points out that the composing process is complex, and that "the beginning writer is of course not prepared to meet these expectations." He must, then, be introduced to the composing process in a

simplified manner, one that will give him a basic understanding of the process and help him to "make sense out of the conventions that govern academic discourse." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 240) Once the Basic Writer can do this, then he can start writing.

But even if Basic Writers do understand the steps of the composing process, do they have the background necessary to start writing? Do they have anything to write about? Of course. Mina Shaughnessy states that "it is inaccurate to say, although many teachers say it, that Basic Writers have no ideas. . . .The points they make are often the same ones that more advanced writers make when writing on the same subject. The differences lie in the style and extent of elaborations. . ." (Shaughnessy 1977, p. 226) And once the student is persuaded to write these ideas, the very task of writing leads him to search "for the word that fits his meaning. . .and in his search, the writer. . .is advancing his thought." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 221)

Writing is so personal. So much of it comes from within. The part of the writing process that can be taught "may be very small and is possibly trivial in relation to the task as a whole," writes James Britton. "A writer draws on the whole store of his experience, and his whole social being, so that in the act of writing he imposes his own individuality." (Britton, 1975, p. 47)

But this is where the Basic Writer's fear and insecurity

create a barrier. He is afraid to be an individual. He is afraid to let himself be vulnerable, to trust his own ideas, to draw on his own experience, to use his own voice. He does not believe that anyone would care to listen to him. He believes, instead, that to succeed in an academic setting he must adopt "classroom" language, that his writing must sound scholarly like his professors and textbooks. So the Basic Writer needs to be convinced, as Lou Kelly, who teaches rhetoric at the University of Iowa, expresses in his article "Toward Competence and Creativity in an Open Classroom," that his "own language and experiences--external and internal--that he wishes to share make the best content for composition. Or to say it another way: the content of composition is the writer--as he reveals his self, thoughtfully and feelingly, in his own language, with his own voice." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 3)

Perhaps the first step is to cause the Basic Writer to unlearn some misconceptions about his role in the classroom; perhaps it is to rid him of the belief that writing is a process of "getting through a teacher's drudging assignments," of somehow managing to "turn out a finished product that [will] pass somebody's inspection," of simply engaging in some "phony game played for the chips called grades." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 3) The teacher must begin by tempering his image: the image of the remote professor who stands in judgment of the ignorant student. He must soften his pedantic language, take

off his mortar board and flowing black robe, make an effort to prevent the "better-than-thou" impression from being imparted, and thus give the student a chance to believe that his voice may indeed have a pleasant, worthwhile ring. Mina Shaughnessy believes that the teacher must be a mediator between the language the student brings to class and the academic language, serving the student "both as translator and model, trying not to lean so far toward the student's language as to misrepresent the task of the [school] and appear foolishly adaptive, nor yet to appear so bound by the academic conventions as to be insensitive to the difficulties they pose for others." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 225)

For if the Basic Writer's voice is stifled by a feeling of inadequacy, if he is ashamed of it and afraid to use it, how can he even begin to write? Peter Elbow points out that "a student who has a voice in the words he puts on paper can be said to 'have words' or be able to 'find words' in a way that the other student cannot. This can be quite literally the case: many students without a voice simply have an agonizing time finding words. They struggle over each sentence, break down in the middle, and sometimes cannot even produce at all. It can be a kind of muteness or radical incoherence." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 24)

Another strategy which helps the student to discover this voice is to have him write to someone specific. Elbow feels that "the student's best language skills are brought out and developed when writing is considered as words on

paper designed to produce a specific effect on a specific reader." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 23) If the teacher acquaints the Basic Writer with the idea of writing his own words to his own audience, he may well have taken the vital first step in getting him writing. "It may be that the most characteristic use of language--the use of language that will permit people to liberate and develop the greatest skill--is language for the production of certain effects in readers and the presentation of the self." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 27)

The Basic Writer in particular will unearth surprisingly worthwhile thoughts once he overcomes his fear of revealing himself and has sufficient reason to express his ideas. Once he has someone to write to and once he feels free to be completely honest in his writing, the Basic Writer, Elbow discovered, "can miraculously achieve a high degree of truth and a strong, clear prose on certain occasions when he somehow involves himself and gets turned on." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 28) True, he may "make spelling and syntatical errors, he may organize his papers badly and reason badly; and his sentences may contradict all the structural canons of what is currently good prose." But once he has written something in his own voice, "the other excellences can grow more naturally, organically--and usually more quickly--than in the case of the student whose words on paper are totally lacking in life." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 24)

Elbow feels, then, that the mechanical errors that the Basic Writer will inevitably make as he begins writing are better dealt with after the student has discovered something to say and has made an honest effort to say it. It is much more natural to do something about the grammatical problems that are inhibiting the reader from receiving the writer's message once the writer has established a message that he wants to share. Besides, if the Basic Writer feels he must understand all the rules of correct grammar and put them to use as soon as he begins writing, he will by stymied.

The Basic Writer will be equally thwarted by having his first effort attacked by a run-away red pencil. It is easy enough to understand the writing teacher's quandry. He wants the student to write successfully, to meet the standards of college course work. He looks at the student's writing and sees a grammatical catastrophe. He is horrified. He instinctively reaches for his red pencil. And immediately the Basic Writer quits. This makes sense. For if the teacher's goal is to get the dazed Basic Writer out of his state of shock; if it is to terminate his period of immobility, to open up his throttle, to unstick his gears, and to project him forward; if it is to turn him on with his first understanding of what writing really is, that it is using his own voice in a logical, orderly manner to share valid information with a reader, then it is utter foolishness to halt him with a road-block.

And it is a definite road-block when a student finally

dares to make a feeble attempt to write and someone takes that dreaded red pencil and draws circles around all the errors, covering the paper with "sp's" and "awk's" and "run-on's". It is just so discouraging. And he doesn't understand them anyway. Janet Emig, in her study of The Composing Processes Of Twelfth Graders, states blatantly that "much of the teaching of composition in American high schools is essentially a neurotic activity. There is little evidence, for example, that the persistent pointing out of specific errors in student themes leads to the elimination of these errors, yet teachers expend so much of their energy in this futile and unrewarding exercise." (Emig, 1971, p. 99)

R. W. Reising, in his article "Back to Basics in Composition. . .Huh?" makes the point in BOLD BLACK PRINT that "a lot of red-penciling does not lead to a lot of writing improvement." He feels strongly that "humanity's in, bloodletting's out" and that students "have sensitive egos that can easily be damaged." (Reising, 1975)

Robert Blake, in his article "Setting Up An Effective Writing Program in the Schools" points out that "if writing teachers see their major function as rooting out mechanical errors in papers, illuminating the mistakes in red, and subtracting points from papers on the basis of these errors, whether they know it or not, they establish an adversary relationship between them and their students. When just the opposite should be the case." (Blake, "Setting Up," 1980)

Kenneth Koch, in his introduction to Rose, Where Did You Get That Red? explains that he too finds the most success in getting his students to write by asking them "not to worry about spelling (or punctuation or neatness). All that can be corrected later. De-emphasizing these mechanical aspects of writing makes it easier for everyone to write and makes it possible thereby to write and come to love it; I had children like this, in fact, terrible spellers, who developed into fine and enthusiastic poets, and into students with more confidence in themselves as well." (Koch, 1973, p. 22)

Lou Kelly says that writing is "the whole complex process of putting words together to say what we think and feel" and that it does not initially "include spelling and punctuation and 'correct' usage." Therefore, in his writing classes Kelly has put mechanics "where they belong--in a totally separate and final stage of the human (or academic) activity that ends in a paper for somebody to read. We call that final stage COPYREADING . . .But we never ask anyone to spend a lot of time working on copyreading until he can fill a page with some ease and with much pride in the sound of his own voice on paper." (Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 13)

"Teachers who equate 'writing' with mechanical concerns confuse a low level part with the whole composing process," Robert Blake explains. "Writers pay attention to such matters in the last stages of the writing process, when they edit final drafts." Teachers, too, should delay handling these

"matters" until the student is ready to produce his final copy. Even then, however, teachers should not handle them by red-penciling, by "being the person who 'corrects,'" but by establishing themselves as "'trusted readers,' as 'writing coaches' who firmly but humanely prod and coax students to write better." (Blake, "Setting Up," 1980) R. W. Reising adds that "a handful of well-chosen comments, at least a couple of them ego-building, can go a lot further toward developing writing mastery than can a horde of red scribblings scattered in every nook and crevice of a writer's noblest effort." (Reising, 1975, p. 17)

The teacher should compliment the piece, appreciate it for its content, and then work together with the student to help him discover his own errors. Then, through integrated lessons directed at correcting the most glaring mechanical errors, he can teach him how to correct them. Of course, the Basic Writer cannot turn out a grammatically perfect paper after one semester of training, but he will make significant improvement. Errors will be repeated. It takes time. Mina Shaughnessy suggests that some errors must be tolerated "simply because they must be rubbed off by time." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 121) Many errors are so habitual that even though the student learned the lesson at the time, the mistake will still occur in his writing. In her text Shaughnessy outlines a method of handling error which she finds practical. First the student, together with the teacher, discovers a weak area in

his piece of writing. The teacher gives a concentrated lesson on that concept. The student practices. The teacher teaches it again. The student practices. After that, the teacher simply puts a check in the margin, and the student can pursue the problem independently.

The teacher who implements all of these methods of teaching writing; who shows the Basic Writer how to follow the steps of the composing process like a published author; who appreciates his ideas, shows an interest in hearing them, and approves of the way he expresses them; and who refrains from tearing his efforts (and his ego) to bits by throwing a seemingly unrelated deluge of grammar rules at him will already be taking vital steps in building up his self-esteem. But he can do more. And he most definitely should.

Since the Basic Writer is a discouraged student, filled with insecurities and apprehensions, he needs more encouragement than the average student. When he enters college he believes himself incapable of expressing himself in writing. So he will not even try. Moffett discusses the importance of "unlearning" erroneous facts in order to learn the correct ones--a difficult and tedious process. And it is a difficult, slow-moving process for the Basic Writer to learn that he can do something that for years he has believed he cannot. It takes persistent repetition of positive statements. And this takes a lot of patience.

It is a real challenge for the writing teacher to

sufficiently encourage the Basic Writer. His own positive attitude, his own cheerful, optimistic outlook, can be contagious. He must be alive, alert, inquisitive, responsive, and turned on to each individual student's needs. He must listen to the student's feelings, be sensitive to his interests and talents, encourage him to develop and display his own temperament and personality, and recognize his potential. He must be able to identify the factors in the student's past experience which have instilled in him this inhibiting fear of taking the "big step" of engaging himself in the inimitable process of writing.

James Britton emphasizes the importance of getting the writer past his initial stage of fear. "For the child who can barely manage the task," he points out, "the conception stage can be harder than the writing itself. It is then that total bafflement can set in. He may ask very simple questions, or raise points that have already been answered, in the hope of finding some clue, or he may sit silently mystified for fear of displaying his ignorance. Recollection of past failures will tend to make him think that he is bound to misinterpret the task; he will imagine difficulties that aren't there. And teachers have dozens of ways of restoring confidence." (Britton, 1975, p. 25)

James Moffett proposes a system of "feedback and response," a method of communication between teacher and student which works to encourage the reluctant student.

"Feedback," he explains, "is any information a learner receives as a result of his trial." Since "in learning to use language the only kind of feedback available to us is human response," Moffett advocates "plentiful and informal feedback" from the teacher, for the "learner needs very much to feel successful, to score. . . .When response is real and personal, it does not leave us empty, even if our efforts missed their mark." (Moffett, 1968, p. 200)

Robert Blake gives good, concrete advice on how to do this. He states that "especially at the beginning, all of our comments are aimed at helping the inexperienced writers gain confidence in themselves as persons and as writers. We must praise a great deal. We find at least one interesting word, phrase, or idea to note. . . .We want to keep our comments in perspective. We note important things in our students' writing like honest reactions, fresh observations, sustained point of view, precise use of words, good openers, expert use of dialogue, or the generation of excitement." (Blake, "How to Talk to a Writer," 1976)

Kenneth Koch, who has experienced success in getting children to write poetry, relates that "with as free and inspiring a classroom atmosphere as I could create. . .and with a good deal of praise and encouragement from me and from each other, my students came to love writing poetry."(Koch, 1973, p. 5) He believes that "to help children write well and enjoy it, perhaps the most important thing. . .is to be

positive about everything." So he "responded appreciatively to what they said and to what they wrote. Everything had some value. . . .If I preferred some lines or ideas to others, I responded more enthusiastically to those, rather than criticizing the ones I liked less." (Koch, 1973, p. 22)

This kind of encouragement, the kind that persuades the student to believe in himself, is vital for the Basic Writer. Mina Shaughnessy believes that to encourage the "emerging view" that the Basic Writer has of himself (that of a young adult who might accomplish something in the world) "while at the same time representing honestly to him the amount of work that lies ahead is the teacher's most delicate and essential task." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 291) She confirms the fact that "the student who mistrusts his thoughts. . .is hardly in a position to write about them. And little about the academic situation he is caught in is likely to reduce his self-doubts." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 85) In fact, "self-doubt may indeed be the lesson he has learned in school," and, as a result, he "fears that writing will not only expose but magnify his inadequacies." Since the feeling of inadequacy "is antithetical to the impulse that leads people to write," and since writing is "above all, an act of confidence, an assertion of the importance of what has gone on inside the writer," the teacher's primary goal must be to erase the inadequacies and instill that vital feeling of confidence.

Shaughnessy suggests that the teacher "serve (as a

trusted friend or editor might serve the professional writer) as another pair of eyes and another set of responses." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 84) The "conference between teacher and student," she continues,"remains the best way to discover how students have perceived their instructions and to create the bonds of concern and encouragement that energize both teacher and student." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 287) This interaction, of course, since it is rewarding to the teacher as well as the student and has the delightful effect of continually animating both of them, makes this method of teaching a particularly effective one.

Mina Shaughnessy, who was director of City University's Instructional Resource Center when she wrote Errors and Expectations, based her book on analyses of some four thousand essays written by Basic Writers. The knowledge that she gained by exploring these essays remains unrivaled. She shares this knowledge in great detail. The subject is so complex. The students themselves are complex. But the problems these students have, although complex, seem to boil down to three major deficiencies. Shaughnessy's report shows, in essence, that Basic Writers do not know how writers behave when they write (mistakenly believing that "the point in writing is to get everything right the first time"), (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 79) do not have the command of the language they need, (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 73) and lack confidence in themselves in academic situations. (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 85) Assuming that these

are the major problems of the Basic Writer, it seems that a course designed to explain the composing process in simple terms, stressing individual voice, teaching mechanics during the revision stage of each student's own writing, and administering continuous overdoses of encouragement, is quite appropriate.

Aims

The overall aim of this presentation is to provide a method of teaching writing that will instill in the Basic Writer an internal motive for producing writing that is acceptable in his college courses. The motive is the awareness that he is capable of producing acceptable pieces of writing, that to do so is not an overwhelming, frightening task, that it is a task that can be undertaken in logical, reasonable steps, and that it may even be rewarding!

To accomplish this, the teacher's course aims will be:

1. To develop a comfortable rapport. To get to know each student as a person. To ask questions to stimulate the student to talk about himself. To keep the emphasis on the individual.
2. To avoid academic speech, educational jargon, and 50¢ terms to describe the composing process.
3. To give immediate and frequent positive feedback, constant compliments, encouraging comments, etc., to raise self-esteem. To look for something good to say.
4. To avoid submitting the Basic Writer to textbook stimulants. (He is afraid of textbooks. He'll tune it out simply because it is in print.)
5. To dispense with written "rules" on "correct" writing. (For the Basic Writer, the teacher must TOPPLE THE PYRAMID. The "five-paragraph pyramid" frightens him, for he fears he

cannot understand it and cannot properly execute it. This and other "rules" block him, for they are "academic requirements" that make him fearful of attempting to write since in the past he has failed to follow them successfully.)

6. To avoid deadlines.
   (He will wait until the last minute, panic, and give up.)
7. To use oral exercises to stimulate ideas for writing.
   ("Good talk helps to encourage good writing. . .Free flow of talk allows the ideas to be bandied about." Britton, 1975, p. 29)
8. To wait to correct the mechanics until the very end.
   ("Error is a barrier that keeps him not only from writing something in formal English but from having something to write." Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 10)
   (Don't show the student a list of rules, a list of "unsolicited advice" before you ask him to write. It will be unheeded advice, "food offered before he is hungry." Moffett, 1968, p. 202)
9. To work with the student to discover mechanical errors together.
   ("The student's best hope of learning the teacher's criteria will come from enhancing and building up his <u>own</u> talent for distinguishing certain kinds of goodness in writing. . . forcing the student to realize that he does in fact have standards and criteria for judging his own writing." Ohmann and Coley, 1975, p. 21)

10. To avoid written grades.
(Use assessment rather than evaluation. The goal of this course is to learn, not to simply "pass.")

Method

1. Get to know the students (Yes! Take class time!)
   A. Administer Interest Inventory
   B. Use an easy, conversational manner and active listening. Have the students introduce themselves. Ask each one questions about his hobbies, likes and dislikes, hang-ups, free-time activities, etc.
2. Administer Anxiety Questionnaire
   A. Results will likely show a large amount of fear, insecurity, and apprehension in relation to writing assignments. Use the results to identify students with greatest anxiety.
   B. Discuss with class how these fears can cause "blocks."
3. Lead informal discussion of students' attitudes
   A. Discuss attitudes toward self as a person; as a student
      ---Do you expect anyone to read your work?
      ---Do you think you are interesting?
      ---Do you think any part of this class can be "fun?"
      ---Can you "be yourself?" Do you think that you know anything that is worthwhile sharing? Anything that I might want to hear?
      ---Do you ever cross out anything you write?
   B. Discuss attitudes toward writing
      ---Do you think good writing is simple sentences or flowery, fancy ones?

---Do you take the time to tell yourself exactly what it is you're supposed to write about when you're given an assignment?

---Do you think about who the person(s) is you're writing to?

---Are you afraid to use

your own words?

your own ideas?

your own voice?

---Are you afraid of making grammatical mistakes?

4. Present three terms--define and discuss them

A. Audience

Talk about the importance of each student having someone specific to write to.

B. Voice

Talk about the importance of each student really believing that he knows something about a subject that he wishes to share with his audience. Talk about sharing this knowledge in your OWN words, of being yourself as you write it.

C. Mechanics (Grammar)

Tell the students that, believe it or not, for now we are going to ignore this!

5. Stimulate interest in writing; stimulate ideas for topics

A. Explain to the students that their first paper can be on any topic, in whatever mode they find themselves writing. The more difficult modes will come as they practice. As

they write they will automatically increase their skill. For now, the important thing is to get writing and to succeed at it.

B. Use class discussion to encourage each student to find an area he is an "expert" in or a subject that particularly excites him. Some suggestions for doing this are:

1) Throw out ideas about <u>early memories</u>. Ask students to recall a happy time, a best friend from childhood, something that really frightened them, or a conflict they had with a parent.

2) Let <u>imagination</u> flow.
Shut you eyes and imagine you're in a place you know and like. You walk along and notice something new. You go investigate it. . . Is it an unusual journey? Any unusual people? Talk about it.

3) Combine <u>art forms</u>.
Draw a picture of a child. Next to it draw a picture of a real animal. Add an imaginary animal. Then add some object which is totally unrelated. Now give each a name. Give the place a name. Tell what they all have in common. Now start talking about what is happening.

4) <u>Descriptions</u> of self.
Give the title of a book that you feel is YOU and tell why. Do the same with type of vacation, food, car,

flower, color, etc.

5) Talk <u>freely</u> about something that's on your mind, something that's bothering you.

6) Tell about something you are really <u>interested</u> in, like a hobby, a sport, a job--something you spend your own time at because you love it. (This can be done in pairs, since Basic Writers are usually reluctant to share in front of a whole group.)

6. Introduce <u>The Composing Process</u>

A. Give each student a copy of the composing process written in language that is simple, slangy, and "fun." (see next page) Discuss it together.

B. Have each student begin with an exercise in "freewriting." (Peter Elbow)

---Just freely write anything and everything you can about the first topic that comes into your head. Don't change your mind about the topic. And don't stop. Keep writing. Don't sit back to think or rest. Stop when I tell you.

---Now read your piece through and at the top of the paper tell in <u>one sentence</u> what you think the point is--what it is you said.

C. Select one student's freewriting piece. Read it aloud to the group. Put it on the wall with an overhead projector and demonstrate working through the composing process with it.

The Composing Process

PANIC STRIKES

"I'm in trouble. I have to write something about_____."

TAKE A BREAK

"I need time to calm down."

SET BRAIN IN MOTION

"Let's see. What do I know about this subject? I need someone who will bounce some ideas around with me."

THE PEN TAKES OVER

"Okay. Here goes. I'm going to write and write and write until I have everything down on paper."

QUICK CHANGE ARTIST: SWITCH FROM WRITER TO READER

"Now, just what did I say? What is my main point?"

SHIFT TO FOREMAN OF DEMOLITION CREW

This part doesn't have anything to do with my main point. This will have to go. This part is in the wrong order."

NEXT BECOME A SURGEON

"Now I'll just put this all back together again the right way."

NOW POLISH IT TILL IT SHINES

"Say, this is pretty good. If the mistakes were corrected, I'll bet someone would enjoy reading it. I'm going to fix them. Then I can copy it over and I'm done."

1) State the main point.

2) Cross out all that isn't related to this point.

3) Put it in a better order.

4) Re-write it on a fresh piece of paper.

5) Fix "annoying" mechanical errors and copy it over.

7. Now let the students try the composing process.

A. Have them select a topic (probably one that they zeroed in on during the earlier exercises.)

B. Leave the students alone to WRITE. (Teacher shuts up and goes and sits in a corner of the room.)

C. As each student completes his rough draft, the teacher turns tutor. Take one student at a time and read his draft aloud to him. (I find it more successful if I read it and let him hear how it sounds. He gets nervous about reading and this gets in the way of his response.)

D. Together formulate a one-sentence statement which sums up the point he made.

E. Go through the rough draft with him and
* all the parts which are related to this point
make an X through all parts which are not.

F. Put the * parts in a logical order.

G. Add sentences which link them together so they flow.

H. Then have the student re-write the piece.

I. Have the student read the re-write aloud to me. Never criticize it. No negative comments. Show obvious pleasure with his work.

---I'm proud of you!

---I really understand what you're telling me!

---I never thought of it that way before!

---I wish you'd told me even more about _____.

J. Work with him to make it "even better."

---Can you put in some better words to replace any that are dull or inaccurate?

---Can you think of any details to add in this part?

---Can you make some of the sentences longer? Try putting two sentences together using words like however, therefore, for example, or that is.

---Can you help me fix some of the mechanical mistakes? (I hate to let them mess up my enjoyment of your writing.)

Once the student has discovered several errors (with guidance,) have him suggest a particular grammatical problem which he sees recurring and would like to learn to correct. Have him work on worksheets aimed at correcting that area. For the Basic Writer a natural progression would be to deal with grammatical problems in their order of difficulty:

1) Have him read his paper out loud and try to catch accidental mistakes (like missing a word.)

2) Next have him learn to correct sentence errors: fragments, run-on's, blurred patterns, and reversed or confused orders of words in sentences.

Let the student read his sentence. Then try out some substitutes on him. Next let him try his own. Explain reasons why some of his won't work. Let him try again.

3) Teach him subject, verb, and object. Have him do worksheets on their function in the sentence.

4) Next have him correct the major errors in punctuation. Have him do worksheets on use of periods, then commas, then quotation marks, and then capitalization.

5) Encourage him to discover and correct spelling errors. First help him to see what he has <u>really</u> written, not what he <u>thinks</u> he has written. Then use the "notice-doubt-think about-look up" method. Then proceed to worksheets on basic "rules" of spelling, starting with the ones which are most reliable.

6) After each paper that the student writes, teach him to <u>ask himself</u> five questions which he should memorize:

---Is each group of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with an end mark a sentence?

---When I read this orally, have I correctly put "s's" and "ed's" on the verbs?

---I can identify a subject and a verb in each sentence. Now, do they agree?

---Have I used the same tense throughout the paper?

---Can any of the sentences be made clearer?

K. Now have the student copy it over so it is reasonably neat.

8. Determine with the class if each paper meets the standards of the 101 Freshman Comp course. Use assessment rather than evaluation. (No grade)

low				high
1	2	3	4	5

Purpose: Is the purpose or main point clear?

Organization: Is it in a logical order?

Audience: Is it written for a specific reader?

Voice: Does the writer's own personality come through?

Content: Does it give us enough appropriate information?

Word Choice: Does he use the right words?

Sentence Variety: Are there long and short sentences?

Mechanics: Are the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization acceptable?

9. Have the students repeat the process in three more modes for the remainder of the semester. Have them try them in order of difficulty:

---a descriptive piece

---a narrative

---an expository piece

INTERESTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions as fully and as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. What are your favorite television programs?

2. What kinds of television programs do you dislike?

3. What kinds of books do you dislike?

4. What kinds of books do you especially like?

5. What books have you read a second time?

6. What do you like to do in your spare time?

7. What kinds of movies do you make a special effort to see?

8. What hobbies and/or special interests do you have?

9. Do you enjoy athletics?
   a. Principally as a participant?
   b. Principally as a spectator?
   c. What sports do you like best?

10. What kind of work do you hope to do after you leave college?

From "Finding Out about your Students" Responding- Alan C. Purves

LEARNING SKILLS CENTER
Cooper C-3
395-2293

Developmental Education
SUC Brockport
Brockport, New York 14420

QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Below are a series of statements about writing. There are right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) are uncertain, 4) disagree, 5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

1.	I avoid writing	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I look forward to writing down my ideas	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated	1 2 3 4 5
5.	Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience	1 2 3 4 5
6.	Handing in a composition makes me feel good	1 2 3 4 5
7.	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition	1 2 3 4 5
8.	Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I like to write my ideas down	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I like to have my friends read what I have written	1 2 3 4 5
13.	I'm nervous about writing	1 2 3 4 5
14.	People seem to enjoy what I write	1 2 3 4 5
15.	I enjoy writing	1 2 3 4 5
16.	I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas	1 2 3 4 5
17.	Writing is a lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them	1 2 3 4 5
19.	I like seeing my thoughts on paper	1 2 3 4 5
20.	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course	1 2 3 4 5
22.	When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly	1 2 3 4 5
23.	It's easy for me to write good compositions	1 2 3 4 5
24.	I don't think I write as well as most other people	1 2 3 4 5
25.	I don't like my compositions to be evaluated	1 2 3 4 5
26.	I'm no good at writing	1 2 3 4 5

Taken from article by Daly, J. A. and Miller, M. D. "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension" RTE, 1975, 242-248.

LEARNING SKILLS CENTER
395-2293/2471

SUNY BROCKPORT
Brockport, New York 14420

Writing Assessment: Writer's Perception

DIRECTIONS: For each of the following statements circle the number from "0" to "4" that best matches your perception of your typical response to that question.

0 = never 1 = more than 0 2 = more than 1 3 = more than 2

4 = always true

		SCALE
1.	I like my written answers to my assignments.	0 1 2 3 4
2.	I don't get the grade I need on my written work.	0 1 2 3 4
3.	For assignments I just write out my answer and turn it in.	0 1 2 3 4
4.	I think outlining first will solve most writing problems I might have with an assignment.	0 1 2 3 4
5.	It doesn't bother me to have my written work graded.	0 1 2 3 4
6.	I misspell some important or meaningful words, but I use them anyhow to get my message across.	0 1 2 3 4
7.	I don't mind writing papers that are three to five pages long.	0 1 2 3 4
8.	I just guess at using punctuatio, other than the period, question mark, and capital.	0 1 2 3 4
9.	I would prefer to have an interview with a prospective employer rather than have to first address him through a two to three page letter of application.	0 1 2 3 4
10.	I feel comfortable writing research papers.	0 1 2 3 4
11.	I wish I could let the instructor know what I've learned in some manner besides writing.	0 1 2 3 4
12.	I work and rework my written presentation of an answer before I turn it in.	0 1 2 3 4
13.	Spelling is a serious writing problem for me.	0 1 2 3 4
14.	Reading my writing to a friend helps me see where I want to rework main ideas and organization.	0 1 2 3 4
15.	Instructors prefer student writing to sound like textbooks.	0 1 2 3 4
16.	My course grades are what they should be to reflect what I really know or have learned about the subject I have written on.	0 1 2 3 4
17.	When I rework an assignment it is because I want to make my points clearer.	0 1 2 3 4

18.	I am not proud of my written answers to my assignments.	0 1 2 3 4
19.	I try to avoid courses with written assignments.	0 1 2 3 4
20.	I don't try to outline my ideas for an assignment before I begin it.	0 1 2 3 4
21.	I don't rework my assignments because I think the instructor can figure out what I mean if the facts are there.	0 1 2 3 4
22.	I am confident with my spelling ability.	0 1 2 3 4
23.	I have difficulty doing a research paper.	0 1 2 3 4
24.	I don't read my writing to other people.	0 1 2 3 4
25.	A two to three page letter of application for a special job would not be difficult for me to write.	0 1 2 3 4
26.	The whole business of organizing my writing mystifies me, so I just write it out as I think of it.	0 1 2 3 4
27.	I am comfortable punctuating my writing and using commas and semi-colons appropriately.	0 1 2 3 4
28.	I can write a credit company a letter that would convince them to review my application for a loan.	0 1 2 3 4
29.	After I've thought of my ideas and written them down, I try to arrange them in the best order for presentation.	0 1 2 3 4
30.	I don't try to sound like a textbook when I write for my instructors.	0 1 2 3 4
31.	I feel my first draft of a writing says what has to be said and so I don't try to rework it.	0 1 2 3 4
32.	I think about an assignment for awhile and toss it around in my mind before beginning to do any writing at all.	0 1 2 3 4
33.	I prefer writing essays for course evaluation instead of other means of evaluation.	0 1 2 3 4
34.	I think my grade for a course is lower than it should be because my writing didn't let the instructor know what I knew about the subject.	0 1 2 3 4
35.	I don't mind taking courses with written assignments.	0 1 2 3 4
36.	It would be difficult for me to write a credit company letter that would convince them to review my application for a loan.	0 1 2 3 4
37.	A lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for me to write what I want to say.	0 1 2 3 4
38.	I find I need to work and rework a piece of writing several times before it really handles the task required.	0 1 2 3 4

39.	Writing papers longer than three to five pages is difficult for me.	0 1 2 3 4
40.	I receive acceptable grades on my written work.	0 1 2 3 4
41.	I am confident about my vocabulary when I am writing.	0 1 2 3 4
42.	I avoid using words I can't spell.	0 1 2 3 4
43.	It bothers me to get a grade on my writing.	0 1 2 3 4
44.	I just start writing and hope my ideas will come as I get going.	0 1 2 3 4
45.	The writing programs in my high school provided excellent instruction.	0 1 2 3 4
46.	My high school English teachers worked individually with students to help improve their writing skills.	0 1 2 3 4
47.	My writing assignments in high school were carefully corrected by my teachers.	0 1 2 3 4
48.	I enjoyed my English programs in junior and senior high schools.	0 1 2 3 4
49.	I appreciate teachers (English & others) who emphasize grammar and written composition.	0 1 2 3 4
50.	Instead of a formal essay as an assignment, I would much rather write a story.	0 1 2 3 4
51.	My English programs in junior and senior high school were not enjoyable.	0 1 2 3 4
52.	I would not prefer to write a story as an assignment instead of a formal essay.	0 1 2 3 4
53.	I don't like teachers (English & others) who stress grammar and written composition forms.	0 1 2 3 4
54.	My high school writing assignments were not carefully corrected by my teachers.	0 1 2 3 4
55.	The English teachers in my high school did not work individually with students to help improve their writing skills.	0 1 2 3 4
56.	In my high school, the writing programs were not of an excellent instructional quality.	0 1 2 3 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barzun, Jacques. Simple and Direct. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

Blake, Robert W. "Assessing English and Language Arts Teachers' Attitudes Toward Writers and Writing," The English Record, Vol. XXVIII (Summer-Autumn, 1976), No. 3-4:87-97.

Blake, Robert W. "Guidelines for Encouraging Growth in Writing," unpublished, 1979.

Blake, Robert W. "How to Talk to a Writer, or Forward to Fundamentals in Teaching Writing," English Journal, Vol. 65 (November, 1976), No. 8:49-55.

Blake, Robert W. "I See You, I Hear You, You're O. K.: Humanizing the English Classroom," English Journal (May, 1974), pp. 41-46.

Blake, Robert W. "Setting Up An Effective Writing Program in the Schools," Impact, Vol. 15 (Winter, 1980), No. 2:11-19.

Blake, Robert W. "The Writer as Writer and Critic: How to Be a Schizophrenic and Still Not End Up In Bedlam," Indiana English Journal, Vol. 9 (Spring, 1975), No. 3:3-9.

Book, Virginia. "Some Effects of Apprehension on Writing," paper presented at the American Business Communication Association, San Diego (November, 1976).

Bowie, Cam. "The Problems and Rewards of Teaching Writing," The Monroe Doctrine, Vol. 15 (30 Sept., 1976), No. 5:6.

Britton, James, et. al. The Development of Writing Abilities(11-18). London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975.

Church, Gladdys W. "Setting Up a Tutorial Place for Basic Writing Skills," Impact, Vol. 15 (Winter, 1980), No. 2: 27-35.

Daly, John A. and Michael D. Miller. "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension," Research in the Teaching of English, 9 (Fall, 1975), 242-249.

Elbow, Peter. Writing Without Teachers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Emig, Janet. The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1971.

Kingston, Cecelia M. "Johnny Learns What We Teach Him," Impact, Vol. 15 (Winter, 1980), No. 2:39.

Koch, Kenneth. Rose, Where Did You Get That Red? New York: Random House, 1973.

Lasch, Christopher. "Why Johnny Can't Read, Write or Think," Democrat and Chronicle (21 January, 1979), sec. F.

Luban, Nina; Ann Matsuhashi, Tom Reigstad. "One-to-One to Write: Establishing an Individual-Conference Writing Place," English Journal, (November, 1978), 30-35.

Mc Crimmon, James M. Writing With a Purpose. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.

Mc Mahan, Elizabeth. A Crash Course in Composition. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1973.

Mead, Margaret. "Why Our Schools Are Failing To Teach," Redbook, Vol. 147 (August, 1976), No. 4:29-33.

Moffett, James. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968.

Murray, Donald M. "What Can You Say Beside Awk?" California English Journal (December, 1973).

Ohmann, Richard and W. B. Coley, Ed. Ideas for English 101. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Reachers of English, 1975.

Rabianski, Nancy Munzert. "Preparing the Remedial Student for Essential Writing Competencies," Impact, Vol. 15 (Winter, 1980), No. 2:21-26.

Rackham, Jeff. From Sight to Insight. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Reising, R. W. "Back to Basics in Composition. . .Huh?" Indiana English Journal, Vol. 9 (Spring, 1975), No. 3:17.

Richards, Carol R. "Writing Still Basically Bad." Democrat and Chronicle (7 Sept., 1979), sec. B.

Shaughnessy, Mina P. Errors and Expectations. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Sheils, Merrill. "Why Johnny Can't Write," Newsweek (8 Dec., 1975), pp. 73-77.

Smith, Roger B. "Why Can't College Students Write?" The News, Vol. 5 (Summer, 1976), No. 9:3.

Tate, Gary, Ed. Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays. Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.

Zagano, Phyllis. "I Can't Teach Comp No More," The Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. VII (1 March, 1976), No. 1:32.

Zemelman, Steven. Making Sense of It: Patterns In English Grammar. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1980.